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Program at Request of C- to Bureau to
Refer to Army & Navy.*

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7 November 1956

MEMORANDUM to Mr. Bissell

SUBJECT: Evidence of Soviet Intentions in the Middle East

1. We have considered a variety of actions which the USSR might take in the Middle East during the next few days and weeks, including direct military action, increased military aid to the Arab States, and expanding the scope of the local war without direct Soviet participation (i.e. by encouraging Jordan and Syria to attack Israel). We believe that the following actions are the only ones likely to be initially discovered by the intelligence methods under consideration:

(a) Soviet reinforcement of Arab air capabilities, either by supplying additional aircraft or by transferring Soviet aircraft and crews to the Arab states;

(b) Extensive airlift of Soviet material or personnel to the Arab states;

(c) Movement of Jordanian or Syrian ground forces toward Israel. (We believe this less likely to be discovered than the two previous actions).

2. Preparations for large-scale Soviet air attack on targets in the Middle East might be initially discovered by photo-reconnaissance, but we believe that the overflight of the USSR necessary to detect such preparations would not be justified unless other intelligence gave reason to suspect that they were under way.

3. We have examined the list of requirements prepared by the Paramount Committee, and believe that it covers the airfield targets in the Arab States on which reinforcements might be discovered. We would think it desirable (other things being equal) to subject these fields to frequent photo-reconnaissance in the immediate future.

4. In order to take rapid advantage of any intelligence pointing to Soviet preparations for major attack in the Middle East, we believe that

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a supplementary requirements list should be prepared immediately. Such a list should include targets in the USSR and the southern Satellites, at which preparations might be made for large-scale Soviet air attacks. For preparing such a list, Soviet specialists and representatives of the National Indications Center should be called upon.

5. We believe that any significant movement of Soviet shipping (including submarines) toward the Middle East would be discovered in good time by other means than photo-reconnaissance.

Sherman Kent